

Frontline Employee

September 2020 A newsletter from the Washington State Employee Assistance Program

COVID and “Back to School” – Resources to Support You

If you're parenting school age kids in our state, it's very likely that “back to school” this year actually means you're back to managing your kids' remote/at-home learning. If you're concerned about how you'll manage and how you and your family might be impacted, you're not alone. [Recent research by the Kaiser Family Foundation](#) warns that nearly half of all parents of school age kids are worried that they will not be able to pay enough attention to their child if they are working from home. In addition, more than half of all parents of K-12 kids reported experiencing one or more adverse health effects due to worry and stress from COVID, with 69% of mothers reporting adverse health effects vs. 51% of fathers.

Here is some information and resources to support you:



First, if your family's needs have shifted and you're concerned about how to manage both your work and caregiving responsibilities, talk with your supervisor. Don't wait until you're really struggling or exhausted! You know your work and your family's needs best, so don't hesitate to come to the discussion with ideas about what you think would work. We understand that some employees may feel cautious about approaching their supervisor or HR team: maybe they've had a difficult experience in the past, or during this time of economic uncertainty their job feels at risk and they feel reluctant to ask for help, or something else. If any of this sounds familiar, before you talk with your supervisor consider visiting your organization's HR pages for information: you will likely find COVID-related links similar to [this link about how 2020 federal COVID-19 leave laws affect state employees](#) (from the [state Office of Financial Management's State Human Resources site](#)). It may also be helpful to check out the State Human Resources division's recent guidance to all state agency HR managers, [Supporting Working Parents and Caregivers](#), part of the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) HR Guidance for State Agencies](#). The guidance counsels agencies to operate with principles such as: maximum flexibility, action not perfection (“Try something. Take a risk and you can make adjustments if it doesn't work.”) and strong support for “accommodating parents and other caregivers to make it possible for them to remain in the workforce and thrive...” You might also find this article helpful, [How to Negotiate to Remote Work from Home During COVID-19](#). And, don't hesitate to reach out to EAP and we can talk through your situation with you.

One vitally important way to support your children's mental and emotional health is to take good care of yourself. For some, self-care can feel selfish, like you're taking time away from taking care of your kids or your other responsibilities. But particularly when you're a parent, self-care is actually very practical: when you stop and think about it, if you don't take good care of yourself, in the long run you won't have the capacity to take good care of your kids. Here is some specific [self-care information and guidance tailored to parents](#). You can find additional self-care and mental health resources on our [COVID-19 Resources page](#), including the EAP [Self Care webinar](#) to give you the opportunity to learn more about self-care as well as strategies for managing stress and anxiety.

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Additional resources to support your children's mental and emotional health: our state Department of Health's report, [Behavioral Health Toolbox for Families: Supporting Children and Teens During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), provides guidance and resources to help families better understand and support their mental health and emotional wellbeing by age/grade level. For specific advice on handling some common parenting struggles, such as how to stop losing your temper and yelling or what to do when everyone needs your help at the same time, check out [Coronavirus Parenting: Managing Anger and Frustration](#), one of many mental health and parenting resources on [our COVID-19 Resources page](#).

To better manage at-home learning, take a look at [How to Reduce the Stress of Homeschooling on Everyone](#) and [Strategies for Supporting Learning at Home \(by grade level\)](#) from the Child Mind Institute's collection of [Back to School Resources for Families and Educators](#), also on our [COVID-19 Resources page](#).

And, if you're struggling or feeling overwhelmed or in need of support, please don't hesitate to [reach out to EAP](#): call us at 1-877-313-4455 or contact us [online](#).

Upcoming Live Support EAP Webinars:

How to Build Resilience When Your Job Involves Helping Others in Crisis

This webinar is intended for those who are supporting others in crisis e.g. customers, clients, students, employees/staff. During this webinar you will learn how your mind and body responds to stress, possible impacts on your emotional and physical well-being, strategies to build resilience, and supports and resources available to you.

- Tuesday, September 15, 2020 8:30am-10:00am - [Register](#)
- Thursday, September 24, 2020 2:00pm-3:30pm - [Register](#)
- Wednesday, September 30, 2020 10:00am-11:30am - [Register](#)

Self Care with the WA State EAP

This webinar addresses the emotional impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and offers ideas for self-care and strategies for managing stress and fear.

- Thursday, September 17, 2020 2:00pm-3:30pm - [Register](#)

Navigating Change in Challenging Times

In our ever changing world, learning how to navigate change is an essential skill—one that can be developed. In this webinar we'll talk about the impact of change, actions you can take to navigate change based on your unique response to stress, and resources available to support you.

- Wed. September 23, 2020 8:30am-10:00am - [Register](#)
- Thursday, October 1, 2020 1:00pm-2:30pm - [Register](#)

Navigating Change Handouts:

- [My Change Plan](#)
- [Self-Care at Work](#)

[See All Live Support Webinars](#)



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